

MEDIA RELEASE

A repositioned and highly focused GEP ready to mobilise R700m for Gauteng SMMEs to help re-ignite the economy

23 November 2021: Johannesburg. After a turbulent few years, that included amongst other challenges, a high turnover of executives, an SIU investigation into corrupt practices in its programmes, abuse of labour relations processes and supply chain irregularities, the past few months has seen the Gauteng Enterprise Propeller (GEP) undergoing some very positive changes. The Agency has a new focus and is strengthened to deliver increased impact on the economy.

Said GEP CEO, Saki Zamxaka “It was critical that after the many challenges the GEP had faced, stabilisation of the organisation be a priority. I’m happy to say, we are seeing some good results and progress.”

It hasn’t stopped there; the GEP has seen an improvement on its audit performance after it received an unqualified audit for the previous financial year.

After his appointment in April, Zamxaka hit the ground running, prioritising the strengthening and capacitation of the organisation, including the appointment of a CFO, COO and Executive Head of Strategy and Monitoring. The new GEP leadership has focused on ensuring that the organisation’s processes, policies, and systems are strengthened to avoid the repeat of the mismanagement that has led to investigations. GEP is now becoming a more streamlined and efficient organisation, which is better capacitated to serve Gauteng SMMEs.

There has also been a strengthening of the financial management and procurement processes, the employment of additional staff to deal specifically with applications. All projects, loan applications, partnership proposals, as well as Rebuilding Fund applications are now approved by one committee, and all GEP employees who work with applications, are suitably equipped for these roles. These changes have now enabled the GEP to improve its applications and disbursement rates.

The company’s Annual Performance Plan also ensures that the organisation meets its performance objectives, and targets have been reviewed to ensure that the organisation has impactful deliverables against ongoing monitoring to ensure there is no unauthorised or wasteful expenditure.

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This progress is far reaching, as the GEP is now in a very strong position to mobilise funds aimed at helping fund SMMEs in the province.

Zamxaka explained that the GEP has been working hard behind the scenes to conclude and implement agreements that will see the Gauteng Provincial entity aggregate over R700 million in funds towards supporting Gauteng SMMEs.

The base of these funds comes from an allocation of R250 million from the Gauteng Government. By partnering with the Industrial Development Corporation, retail property owners and SA SME, GEP is planning to surpass the R700 million mark, resulting in a sizeable financial pot that will make a significant contribution towards rebuilding Gauteng's economy.

The message is clear – there is money to help SMME's start or grow their businesses, but they must present bankable business cases that demonstrate potential for high impact and job creation. "The role of SMMEs and consequently the GEP in these current times has become even more critical, and we have secured these commitments to ensure that SMMEs with sufficient promise get the support so that they can contribute to the economic turnaround the province and the country needs," said Zamxaka.

How has the GEP supported SMME's over the past Financial Year? The results are as follows:

- 217 construction and tourism businesses received business development support to the value of R6 544 186.50
- 463 small businesses received non-financial support
- 466 small businesses received grant funding from the TBR , Cap and Community Fund to the value of R9 121 531.00
- 1 260 informal traders benefited from the GEP's relief support to the value of R 1 260 000.00
- Over 500 youth accessed job placement opportunities
- 56 businesses received financial support through business loans

Zamxaka however also acknowledges that there may be some unsatisfied clients who due to a backlog, have not had their applications processed yet.

In response to this, the GEP has strengthened its response system by capacitating its Call Centre. It has also created an escalation process to ensure that those clients whose applications have been in the system for long periods of time are assisted urgently, via the helpline number 087 057 2000 or email, enquiries@gep.co.za.

Concluded Zamxaka, "We are determined to play our part in enabling SMME's through funding and business support to ensure their growth and sustainability, ultimately transforming the structure and competitiveness of industrial sectors in the Gauteng province."

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About the GEP

The Gauteng Enterprise Propeller (GEP) is a provincial government agency which provides non-financial and financial support to SMMEs in Gauteng. The GEP was established under the auspices of the Department of Economic Development to provide support to small, medium and micro-size enterprises and co-operatives in Gauteng. GEP also provides tailored financial and non-financial services that enable SMME's and Co-op's to become active participants in Gauteng's mainstream economy.

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